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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 0301  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0312  
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RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0653  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 0307  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0479  
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 2792  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2174  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001538

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/26/2017

TAGS: PGOV PINR PREL KDEM KG

SUBJECT: NEW KYRGYZ PM AND PARLIAMENT START WORK, WHILE  
OPPOSITION SEES SETBACKS

REF: BISHKEK 1525

Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Former Energy Minister and Bakiyev loyalist Igor Chudinov assumed the prime ministerial post December 24 and indicated a new cabinet would be in place by year's end. In parliament, ex-State Secretary Adakhan Madumarov was elected speaker, and the pro-presidential Ak Jol party obtained control of most parliamentary committees. Meanwhile, extra-parliamentary opposition party Ata Meken vowed to take its election vote challenge to the Supreme Court. Despite strong evidence of electoral fraud, a lower court December 23 rejected Ata Meken's effort to overturn results in Osh city on the grounds that the electoral code has no language permitting the voiding of election results. Opposition groups and NGOs have identified numerous possible strategies to counter the government. END SUMMARY.

NEW PM IN PLACE

¶2. (SBU) Former Energy Minister Igor Chudinov, an ethnic Russian, assumed the Kyrgyz prime ministerial post December 24. Chudinov proposed the government's structure for parliamentary approval the same day, and hinted that Cabinet appointments could occur before year's end. Some opposition groups criticized Chudinov's appointment due to his inability to speak Kyrgyz, a constitutional requirement which some Ak Jol and Communist leaders have deemed unimportant. (Note: Due to engagement in U.S.-financed programs designed to reform the electricity sector, the Embassy has had a constructive relationship with Chudinov. End note.)

PARLIAMENT STRUCTURED, AK JOL FLEXES ITS MUSCLES

¶13. (SBU) Parliament reconvened December 24, elected parliamentary committee leaders, and named ex-State Secretary and Bakiyev loyalist Adakhan Madumarov Speaker. Madumarov has already vowed to "tighten discipline," curtail MP international travel and cut parliamentary staffing outside of Bishkek.

¶14. (SBU) In addition to Madumarov's appointment, ex-Vice Speaker Kubanychbek Isabekov regained his former post, with Aziz Tursunbayev and ex-Constitutional Court Chair Cholpon Bayekova also elected Vice Speakers ) making the parliamentary leadership 100% Ak Jol. Of the 12 parliamentary committees, Ak Jol MPs will chair nine, with the Social Democrats (SDPK) receiving two and leaving one for the Communists.

OPPOSITION CHALLENGED AND, POSSIBLY, CONQUERED...FOR NOW

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¶15. (SBU) Opposition party Ata Meken, which secured no seats in the new parliament due ostensibly to insufficient voter support in Osh city, vowed to pursue its case to the Supreme Court. Despite arguments that the Central Election Commission (CEC) bungled its responsibilities, strong evidence that CEC-processed protocols had been forged and the suspicious technical breakdown of the computerized vote counting system, a lower Bishkek court ruled December 23 that there was no language in the election code to void the election results in Osh city.

¶16. (SBU) As evidence of the forged protocols, Ata Meken

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representatives presented protocols, which record individual precinct results, from up to four different observers that demonstrated a systematic reduction in Ata Meken's vote tallies, often by dropping the first digit, in the CEC-processed protocols. So, for example, in a precinct where three independent protocols showed Ata Meken receiving 211 votes, the CEC version recorded only 11. In another precinct, three protocols showed Ata Meken with 59 votes, but the CEC version only listed nine votes. Similar revisions were documented in numerous Osh precinct protocols.

¶17. (SBU) Opposition groups and NGOs met December 24 to contemplate ways to oppose the government. Ata Meken member Kubatbek Baibolov suggested gathering 300,000 signatures to support constitutional changes. Others suggested creating a "shadow parliament" and holding anti-government demonstrations. Attendees also discussed an "honor code" in order to dissuade opposition activists from being co-opted by the government -- a tactic that has been successfully employed in the past. Ex-Foreign Minister Alikbek Jekshenkulov volunteered to lead the united opposition, proposing the group be called the "Civil Union for Justice."

COMMENT

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¶18. (C) With only token parliamentary opposition and Bakiyev loyalists assuming the prime ministerial and parliamentary speaker posts, the Kyrgyz White House may indeed have something to celebrate this New Year's and have decided to declare January 1-7 an official holiday. When everyone returns, we expect they will continue to settle the remaining organizational issues and then turn to the economic questions that have been on hold for months and even years. The opposition continues to fight back, but its goals remain unclear and we do not expect they will gain momentum until the frigid winter weather turns warmer and more suitable for protests. Even then, it will take money, organization and unity ) commodities hard to find in Kyrgyzstan's opposition.

YOVANOVITCH